

## INTERNATIONAL PEACE

## THE JAINA VIEW

The only way to stop wars is to :—

(i) instil love and respect for life, that is for all forms of life, in the heart of man,

and

(ii) to make him realize, in his understanding, that the consequences of the disregard of the rule of love are terrible for the individual soul.

Nothing else will ever do, as nothing else has ever done in the past. Let us look at the past history of the world. What do we find? Wars and strife, rape and rapine, slaughter and blood-shed wherever you come across nations that ignored the rule of love or that ended their hearts' purification with a mere allusion to it in their speech. On the other hand, look at the Jainas and watch them marching along the vista of time from the hoariest antiquity to the present day. What do you find?

Jaina emperors ruling the country ; Jaina Kings occupying the thrones in many places ; Jaina generals distinguishing themselves on the battle field ; Jaina merchants controlling the conditions of trade ; but nowhere you find them instrumental in causing misery or bringing hardships on mankind. They practised *ahimsa*—the doctrine of non-injuring, which says hurt not even the feelings of any one, not even of an animal, without a just cause. They were at the same time impressed with the terrible nature of the doom that overtakes those who disregard the rule of *ahimsa*, the doctrine of Universal Love.

They understood this much clearly that by injuring any one—even a lowly worm—without adequate justification, a force for evil would be generated which must produce its harmful effect on the doer of the evil deed, and from which

there would be no escape in any way except by undoing it, by the severest of austerities and other forms of severe self-denial. Even when evil is wrought in the name of religion the law applies with full severity; there is and can be no forgiveness of one's sins by any one else!

Jainas lived the life of Love in the past, and they are the only people who have no wanton killing against them in the pages of the world's history. Man lived peacefully with man under the influence of *ahimsa*. Yet Jainas were no cowards; they actually fought wars, and also defeated their enemies. Chandra Gupta, Sandracotas of the Greek Historians, was a Jaina. He was the emperor of nearly the whole of India about 300 B.C. When the ambitious Greeks sought to annex India to their empire, Chandra Gupta took the field against them, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Greek army.

The Jainas are allowed to fight in self-defence, but not with greedy ambitions. They are not allowed to wage religious crusades, or to seek to obtain converts at the point of the sword. In the past other nations and communities have persecuted the Jainas, but never the Jainas are seen persecuting any one.

Now look at the other nations of the world. You will not find any other nation that can show the same clean record. They have waged wars of aggression on others and have also fought amongst themselves internally. Slaughter and blood-shed fill the pages of the histories of the nations of the world. They have passed through blood themselves and have dragged others through blood. Bitter religious wars, too, have characterised their career in many instances. All this notwithstanding that most of the religious scriptures of the world preach the doctrine of mercy and love.

The reason for the failure of these nations is to be found in the fact that the hearts of men have not been touched by the teaching of their scriptures. They have not understood

the nature of the soul, and naturally failed to find any sanctity even in man's life. Their hearts are set on acquisition and fashion more than on the attainment of the religious ideal. They are swayed by powerful emotions of pride and hatred even in connection with Religion.

In Jainism there is no question of the forgiveness of sin. Its doctrine may be summed up in one sentence: destiny is not made for man; man makes it for himself; every one is the maker of his own destiny;—as you sow, so shall you reap; no one can absolve you from the consequences of your actions!

The Jaina Religion aims at opening the understanding. It is not dogmatic. It invites men to understand and intellectually realize the truth of the matter of faith in the first instance. For faith purifies the will and controls the action through it. Where religion is not able to purify the heart, that is to say the will, no control will be exercised by it on action.

Purification of the will is possible only through knowledge, that is Reason. No change is possible in the constitution or disposition of the will except through experience or the process of reflexion on experience, that is to say, through instinctive or intellectual ratiocination. Even facts accepted in the way of blind faith are accepted merely because they seem to be for one's good in some way. Intelligent understanding, however, builds its house on a rock, while the power of dogmatic faith is constantly challenged by actual experience and the contact with reality.

The reason why religion in general failed to sway the hearts of men in the past is to be found in the conflict between dogma and reason. Reason is constantly undermining the foundation of dogma by bringing it in conflict with reality. Even suspicion will prevent the matter of faith from influencing conduct. Man must build his faith on Reason if he will aspire for World Peace<sup>1</sup>

Another cause of the failure of religion generally to control the evil inclinations of men is the belief in the possibility of having one's acts annulled and absolved without having to pay for them. With such a belief there is no question of the goodness or badness of action ; what matters is the pleasure of the forgiving agency. The most horrible and heartless of crimes have been committed by man in the name of his god and religion, in the belief—whether express or implied—that no punishment could be attached to acts done for divine pleasure itself.

To-day if you want to establish a reign of Peace and Good-will for mankind, you must begin by rationalising religious thought and the doctrine of responsibility for individual actions.

We are living in an age of science and rational thought to-day, and the hearts of men are set against unreasoning dogma and myth. This is why people are fleeing away from religion to-day, and will have nothing to do with it. Our wars are mostly made to-day by greedily covetous men who have cut themselves adrift from religion and who cannot be induced to accept anything that is not acceptable to Reason. The majority of men to-day belong to this class. It is idle to expect that wars will be stopped unless these men have their hearts changed in the first instance. If Religion aspires to convert them to its cause it will have to approach them in the language of Reason, which alone they are likely to follow. It must be clearly understood that all talk of dogmatism being able to influence the thought, much less the heart, of any one in our day is pure nonsense. All peace conferences are doomed to fail unless they can induce religions to cut themselves adrift from dogmatism and mythology altogether. I have shown in some of my books how this is not only possible but quite easy of attainment, and how it will enhance the prestige and glory of all religions when properly effected. I will mention the names of some of the books in this connection :

- (1) The Key of Knowledge.
- (2) The Confluence of Opposites.
- (3) The Right Solution.
- (4) Faith, Knowledge and Conduct.
- (5) Jainism, Christianity and Science.
- (6) The Lifting of the Veil or the Gens of Islam.
- (7) The Householder's Dharma.

These books will show that Religion is itself a science, the Science of Life. But its teaching is found to be preserved in two different ways to-day: (1) in a plain matter-of-fact language, as in Jainism, and (2) in allegorical imagery, as is the case mostly with the scriptures of the other religions. To-day men have lost the true reading of the allegorical script, and are quarrelling with one another and with intellectual rationalism, in consequence. But in reality identically the same thought and teaching lie hidden under allegory and pictorial orientation in almost every religion. It should thus be easy to reconcile men to one another and to rationalism, and to give them a religious outlook which will have the support of their Reason and reality, and which will be able to control their will, and also, through it, their action.

All this, I say, is possible, if we work in the proper way and direct our thoughts to the real problems facing us. Mere pious wishes will only end in bringing us together on a platform where we are as likely as, indeed, more likely than not to quarrel with one another.

I am not exaggerating the opposition of 'free-thinking' rationalism in the world of to-day when I say that no conference that avoids or fails to reconcile Religion and Science is ever likely to succeed in making a man give his coat and overcoat both when only one of them is demanded at law. The man of to-day is anxious to take and retain, but not to give. We must also recognise, in the clearest manner possible that there can be no world-peace so long as

men and nations do not undo the damage they have done to weaker men and communities. The distinction of colour must go ; that of religion itself must cease. There shall be no more favourable treatments, zones of influence or commercial privileges, for one set of men against another ; and the lynching of the 'niggers' must stop. It is only when this has been accomplished, in the hearts of men, not in words alone, that we shall be deemed to be seriously contemplating a step that will no longer fail in the category of unpractical wordy camouflage. We must show sincere repentance, undoing what damage we have done to one another as nations, and start with a clean slate for the future. If any one think that a mere referring to the moral precepts contained in religious scriptures will be able to wipe out evil from the hearts of men and the world both, let him ponder over the following from Mr. J. M. Robertson's "Short history of Christianity", which is not quoted here in a spirit of malice, but as furnishing a purely psychological basis for the investigation of the causes of the failure of different religions, to persuade man to live happily with his fellow man, what is true of Christianity being also true of most other religions.

"It is in regard to the influence of religious teaching on international relations, however, that the saddest conclusions are forced upon the student of Christian history. The foregoing pages have shown how potent has been organized Christianity to promote strife and slaughter, how impotent to restrain them. If any instance could be found in history of a definite prevention of war on grounds of Christian as distinguished from prudential motives, it would have been there recorded. So flagrant is the record that the Christian defence veers round from the position above viewed to one which unconsciously places the source of civilization in human reason. Yet even thus the historic facts are mis-stated. The enormity of Christian strifes in the past is now apologetically

accounted for by the fantastic theorem that hitherto men have not 'understood' Christianity, and that only in modern times have its founder's teachings been comprehended. Obviously there has been no such development. The gospels' inculcation of love and concord are as simple as may be, and have at all times been perfectly intelligible : what has been lacking is the habit of mind and will that secures the fulfilment of such precepts."

Mr. Robertson explains the reason for the absence of what may be termed the proper religious habit of the mind as follows :

"An explanation is to be found in a study of the normal results of guiding conduct by emotional leanings rather than by critical reflection. The former is peculiarly the process of evangelical religion. Hence comes the practical inefficacy of a love of peace derived either inertly through acceptance of a form of words declared to be sacred, or through an emotional assent to such words emotionally propounded. Emotions evolved are of the surface, and are erased as easily as they are induced, by stronger emotions proceeding from the animal nature. Only a small minority of Christians, accordingly, are found to resist the rush of war-like passions ; and some who call most excitedly for peace when there is no war are found among those most excited by the war passion as soon as the contagion stirs."

Does the voice of history proclaim any other of the Semitic group of religions to have fared better in bringing happiness and peace to mankind ? Mr. Robertson does not think so ; he adds :

"Whatever may be the outcome of freedom for self-development in the light of western civilization, there is plainly little to choose as between Christian, Jewish, and Moslem moral material in those regions after two thousand

years of Christianity. Such facts bring out once for all the sociological truth as to the part played by Christianity in civilization. The progress of the more advanced states has not been caused by the creed. If that were the lifting factor, Abyssinia should be on the same plane with the leading European states. Once more, it is not Christianity that has civilized modern Europe, but the variously caused and conditioned progress of Europe that has civilized Christianity."

I shall now turn to the Jaina view of things, and devote the rest of this article in working out the consequences of practising the principle of *ahimsa* in various departments of life and their effect on internal and external, *i.e.* national and international peace.

(1) For the individual Jainism points out that the soul is a simple substance, as distinguished from a compound, which survives bodily death, because death only overtakes compound things, but not simple elements. It cannot therefore die out, and will have to reincarnate elsewhere. The organizing forces of the body are the energies which constitute its disposition or will. The will is constantly undergoing modification in consequence of individual action, so that the future conditions of life will be controlled altogether by the kind of disposition one makes for oneself. There is no condition of embodied life that is not threatened with calamity and death, nor any that is free from misery and pain. But those who live on the principle of *ahimsa* soon succeed in destroying their animal nature, and thus become freed from the disposition that is the cause of reincarnation and suffering in the world. The soul-nature is a thing that is purely divine, so that when one attains to the purity of his soul-nature one comes into the enjoyment of unlimited knowledge and happiness and power and immortality. It is, therefore, clearly to the advantage of the individual to practise Universal love. There is no other way of escaping from undesirable re-births,



Materially also, the practising of such virtues as truthfulness, justice, forgiveness, mercy, self-denial and temperance must bring peace of mind, popularity, respect and prosperity to the individual. He can have no enemies left in the world, but only friends all round.

(2) From the national point of view, *ahimsa* will be found to be the source of confidence and goodwill. It will do away with the need for heavy armaments ; it will not tolerate long-range guns, nor poison gas, nor the bombing of cities and suburbs from aeroplanes. With the reduction of the military and the police there will be immediately a reduction of taxation, and life will once more become tolerable and joyous. Nation will live at peace with nation : passports will be unknown, so will be the temperament that seeks exploitation and self-aggrandisement. Men will practise the golden rule summed up in the phrase 'live and let live,' in reality and truth.

(3) Excessive industrialisation will be checked under *ahimsa*. We are all eager to become manufacturers to-day. Under the guidance of *ahimsa* life will be simplified ; manufactures will be limited ; mechanization will be restricted. Every nation will become self-supporting and self-dependent, growing its own foods.

At the present rate of 'progress' the day is in sight when everywhere there will be manufacturers and producers and nowhere buyers ! Reduction in the number of factories will at once strike at the root of unemployment, since they render idle more men than they employ. It is bad policy to starve many to fill the pockets of a few.

(4) The doctrine of love will also induce legislators to find means of suitably dealing with the problem of the excess of women over men, which, in its turn, will also go to reduce unemployment, and, along with the check on excessive industrialization, will root it out altogether. I might mention in this connection that for those countries where the number

of men is smaller than that of women, *ahimsa* (love) favours the marrying of two women to one man. The advantages from this will be manifold; social life will be purified, and girls will not be under the temptation of employing unmoral and even immoral devices to 'catch' husbands. Those who cannot get married under the monogamous law and who are driven, for no fault of theirs except that they happen to be endowed with the animal appetites like their married brethren and sisters, to seek clandestine amour, will no longer be forced to a life of hypocrisy and shame. Abortions will not be practised as they are in thousands to-day; and infanticide will become a thing of the past. These are only a few of the advantages that will flow from the practice. The opposition to it is merely a matter of *zid* (sentiment). Many women who find themselves unable to be reconciled to the idea of sharing their husbands with another woman, in reality are actually doing so to day, and in a worse form, though unaware of the fact. There can be no valid objection on the ground of religion either. Several of the Biblical patriarchs had more wives than one. We have no right to expect peaceful nationalism while millions of women are forced to lead unhappy lives. The day of reckoning is not far off. Girls have already begun to usurp the places of men in business circles. Let us note that the proper place for the woman is the home and the nursery, not the business house. It is for man to earn; not for the woman. She is to spend, profitably for man, and for herself too, as his partner in life, what he has earned by labour or skill. You cannot reverse the natural role for long, without very grave consequences resulting from a disregard of Nature's Law.

(5) Finally, in our international relations the practising of the doctrine of universal love will at once make men and nations respected and loved. To-day the keynote of international policy is fear; we hate every one, and are hated by every one in our turn. Peace is maintained only through fear

of each other's brute force. This is not freedom even for the nations that are free, who are and have to remain armed to the teeth. True freedom consists in being free from fear altogether. If we aspire to enjoy true national freedom for ourselves, we must first set our neighbours free from fear of ourselves. The measure of our freedom, in reality, is the measure of the freedom of our neighbours, near and remote.

*Ahimsa* is Universal love, and will attain this high ideal, however much it may be beyond the conception of men to-day. Love, and you are sure to be loved. There is only one condition—let your love proceed from the heart but not from the tongue !

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